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ABSTRACT

The movement for equality of women is by no means something new in the United States, but the changing life-patterns of women in the work world, the recent legal basis for equal opportunity, and the modification of sex roles and aspirations due to elimination of bias in elementary and secondary schools are causing important changes in society that are reflected increasingly in higher education. Such features as enrollment on a part-time basis, flexible course hours, short term courses, counseling seminars for adults, financial aid for part-time study, more flexible residence requirements removal of age restrictions, liberal transfer of course credits, curriculum geared to adult experiences, credit by examination, refresher courses, reorientation courses, child care facilities, relaxation of time requirements for degrees and job placement assistance for nontraditional professions particularly benefit women. Some of these features are incorporated into most colleges and universities, but they must be expanded as the needs of women become of equal importance to those of men in planning programs. Change is often a threatening, sometimes painful process, but if approached in a constructive manner, the modification caused by the women's movement will be advantageous to women, men and higher education. (Author/HS)

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"We ask for her educational advantages equal to those enjoyed by the other sex; that the richly endowed institutions, which she has been taxed to establish and support, may be open alike to all her children. We claim for her the right to follow any honorable calling or profession for which she may be fitted by her intellectual capacity and training. We claim for her a fair opportunity to attain a position of pecuniary independence, and to this end that she shall receive for her labor a compensation equivalent to its recognized value when performed by the other sex."

The issue of women's equality in education is not new. The above statement is part of a speech given 120 years ago at a women's rights convention in Pennsylvania. It's all there - equal admissions, equal training and employment, and equal pay.

I should like to read another short quotation:

"Instantly the room was in havoc. The guards from the male prison fell upon us. I saw Miss Lincoln, a slight young girl, thrown to the floor. Mrs. Nolan, a delicate old lady of 73, was mastered by two men.... Two men brought in Dorothy Day, twisting her arms above her head. Suddenly they lifted her and brought her body down twice over the back of an iron bench.... They had been there a few minutes when Mrs. Lewis, all doubled over like a sack of flour, was thrown in. Her head struck the iron bed and she fell to the floor senseless. (As for Lucy Burns, they) handcuffed her wrists and fastened the handcuffs over her head to the cell door."

That is not a description of Chicago in 1968, but Washington in 1917 when women were arrested for demonstrating in front of the White House while trying to gain the right to vote. If you think the tactics of today's feminists are a bit much, remember the tactics of our grandmothers as their demands for equality were frustrated!

As you can see the women's movement in America reaches back into the 19th Century and had its share of militancy. It is not a history of easy successes. The right for women to vote was achieved only after 52 years of continual campaigning. There were parades - more than 8,000 women marching down Pennsylvania Avenue. There were pickets - over 1,000 circling the White House

even in rain. Hundreds of women were jailed. There were hunger strikes - some as long as 22 days. The haunting question is why did it take this kind of pressure for men to grant women this elementary right. Most women and men assumed that by gaining the vote complete equality had been virtually obtained. With the passage of the 19th Amendment the women's movement for the most part collapsed in exhaustion and lay dormant for forty years. There was a renewed interest in women's issues when President Kennedy established a Commission on the Status of Women in 1961. During the 60's Betty Friedan's book "The Feminine Mystique" became a best seller and women's rights groups such as the National Organization for Women and the Women's Equity Action League organized as women once again sought the equality under the law they thought they gained with the vote. By 1970 the contemporary women's movement had moved into high gear and its impact is felt in every aspect of society. The enormous growth of the past two years gives every indication that it has not yet reached its peak!

The contemporary women's movement is composed of a wide spectrum of organizations and groups which range from the consciousness raising of the women's liberation to those who promote only legal equality for women. Women's liberation was brought to public attention by the mass media when a group of women protested the Miss America Contest in 1968. These women felt it was degrading to women and as part of their demonstration threw such items as bras, girdles and hair curlers into a large trash can. Nothing was burned that day, but the derogatory tag of bra burners has been with us ever since.

In truth - a large part of the women's movement today is composed of women's rights organizations whose membership consists principally of educators, lawyers and other professional women. They work through traditional political and legal channels to promote equal rights for women in the courts, through legislation and through enforcement procedures. Also, women have formed

committies and caucuses within most professional organizations to improve their status. Exceedingly significant is the high priority given to the legal equality of women in women's organizations such as the American Association of University Women and the Business and Professional Women. Mature, middle-class women in these organizations are contributing to the efforts for legislative reforms. With this increased interest in women's rights, women are working together, reinforcing each others action and coordinating efforts to become a formidable political power.

An excellent example of the influence, women as a group are exercising, is the passage by Congress of the Federal Equal Rights Amendment. The ERA was first introduced in Congress in 1923 and has been introduced in the House and Senate every session for 49 years. Finally in 1972 Congress passed the Amendment and sent it to the states for ratification - not because legislators had become any more enlightened or sensitive to American ideals - but because over 35 national women's organizations were actively supporting it with lobbying and hundreds of thousands of letters. More mail was received supporting the Equal Rights Amendment than on any other single issue. They had become a political power that had to be dealt with.

One of the most important factors in the revitalization of the women's movement, I believe, is the changing life pattern of modern women. Previously, a typical life pattern for a women was school, perhaps work, marriage, a family.... and she lived happily ever after. A more accurate pattern for today's woman includes school, work and/or marriage, rearing a family (sometimes continuing to work by necessity or choice) and a return to the work force after the youngest child begins school.

This change is reflected in the large increase of women in the labor market today. In 1920, 23% of American women worked; they were usually single women

about 28 years old and seldom remained in the work force long. In 1970 (50 years later) 42% of American women worked, most of them are married and ½ of them are over 35 years old. In the past 20 years, the labor force has increased by only 7 million men, but by 13 million women. The average woman today, despite a break in employment when her children are young has a work-life expectancy of 25 years. Work outside of the home is becoming increasingly more important in the lives of women. Jobs which might be agreeable for short-term temporary employment are much less appealing if they are to be considered for long-term involvement. Filing may be acceptable for 2 or 3 years, but not for 20!! Upward mobility or career ladders are becoming more important for women when considering employment.

Money is the reason most women give for being in paid employment. 70% of the women who work either have husbands who earn less than $7,000 or they are the sole support of their family. For others, supplementing the family income is the "vital link" to the good life - the second car or a college education for a son or daughter. More and more women see a better education as the passport to more desirable employment and higher wages.

The contemporary women's movement is no passing fad. Rooted in the changing role of women and equipped with the necessary legal tools, it is a permanent part of the American political and social scene. Laws alone do not eliminate discrimination, people are a vital ingrediant - people who see that the laws are enforced. Women are becoming expert at this. Moreover, women are creating the organizational structure to enable them to function efficiently beyond the first burst of enthusiasm.

Another significant factor in assuring a permanent change toward equality is the increasing interest in eliminating sex-stereotyping in the elementary and secondary schools by the many women's groups including the large established

women's organizations. Increasingly, women are realizing that the school system is a prime area for the concentration of their efforts. For example, the Citizens' Advisory Council on the Status of Women appointed by President Nixon has adopted the following recommendation:

> State and city commissions on the status of women and other groups interested in education should foster the review of local public school systems to determine the degree of sex discrimination, especially with respect to (1) schools restricted to one sex, (2) courses of study in co-educational schools restricted to one sex, (3) the per capita expenditure of funds by sex for physical education courses and physical education extra curricular and other extra curricular activities, (4) textbooks, library books, and other curriculum aids, (5) school activities, such as hall patrols, safety squads, room chores, etc., and (6) promotion of teachers.

The Higher Education Act of 1972 will give organizations seeking to eliminate bias in the schools a new tool for effecting change. Already national workshops have been held by the National Education Association, WEAL and women's organizations to develop specific courses of action. Predictably, this will produce young women who will neither expect nor accept anything less than full equality. Likewise, the young men, because of their early training which modifies the traditional expectations of women, will be more able to accept women as full partners in society and the country will never be the same again.

These three factors - the changing life-patterns of women, the recent legal basis for equal opportunity, and the modification of sex roles and aspirations due to elimination of bias in elementary and secondary schools - are causing important changes in society which are reflected increasingly in higher education.

Actually, much of the activity to promote sexual equality is occurring on the campuses today. It is disappointing that instead of championing the American ideal of equal opportunity for all persons within their institutions, colleges and universities have been reluctant to even admit there is a problem.

No significant change was noticable until there was Government action. Government intervention into the affairs of the academic community would not be necessary if higher education had tackled discrimination within their institutions with the same ingenuity and enthusiasm that it has used to attract federal funds. Disappointing also, is the attitude of administrators of many institutions of higher education that seek only to meet the minimum legal requirements in their programs for equal opportunity. The image of American higher education as both rigid and conservative can only be reinforced by such attitudes.

There would be no difficulty in women achieving full participation at all levels of education according to their ability were it not for human resistance. People resist or welcome change depending on how it affects them. Therefore, male-dominated colleges and universities would not be expected to welcome change which would dilute influence and control and intensify the competition for jobs in a tight market. Sharing opportunities equally with other persons would not benefit white males. Therefore, extending equality is not likely to have a high priority for them. Many women have found constructive pressure the most effective means of keeping the priority high enough on the list so that it will be dealt with. The pressures, both legal and social, are increasing. Understanding something of the women's movement in our present society, one can speculate on the impact it will have on the programs and policies in higher education.

The overall direction of change will be one of flexibility. No longer will higher education be designed solely to fit men's life-style and achievement goals, but it must consider also the different needs of women, and provide educational opportunities for older persons - expecially women who will want to continue their education after family responsibilities have lessened.

Such features as enrollment on a part-time basis, flexible course hours, short term courses, counseling seminars for adults, financial aid for part-time study, more flexible residence requirements, removal of age restrictions, liberal transfer of course credits, curriculum geared to adult experiences, credit by examination, refresher courses, reorientation courses, child care facilities, relaxation of time requirements for degrees and job placement assistance for non-traditional professions.[1] Some of these are incorporated particularly benefit women. into most colleges and universities, but they must be expanded as the needs of women become of equal importance to those of men in planning programs.

Women will benefit greatly by the developing plans for "external degrees or university without walls" programs which will extend educational opportunities to many women who do not have the time, money or energy to conform to rigid classroom and/or residential requirements.

With the recent emphasis on career education and the increasing time women are spending in paid employment, more and more women will be electing programs which offer knowledge and skill directly related to future employment. At present one-third of all women college students major in education. The Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that the supply of teachers at all levels is estimated to be nearly three-fourths greater than the projected requirements. Other feminine occupations, such as social work, library work, home economics, nutrition and nursing, need for workers will be matched by new entrants. Therefore, the traditional "women's professions" will not offer sufficient employment opportunities for the college educated women.[2] When facing the realities of employment opportunities there will undoubtedly be an accelerated shift away from teacher education and the humanities into community service programs, health-related programs - and even engineering!

In the immediate future women's studies programs will probably continue to increase in number and diversity as they find acceptance as an academic discipline. These programs seek to fill the gap in women's information about themselves and their contributions to society and history. Such courses and programs offered at over 200 colleges and universities last year, are sensitizing both men and women to the socialization process that has restricted women and deprived them of the opportunity to utilize fully their potential.. It is difficult to know at present whether women's studies programs will continue to be a separate entity or whether their content will be incorporated in various disciplines. Both approaches have strong support.

The Higher Education Act of 1972 will give the impetus needed to admit students on the basis of sex-neutral qualifications and one would expect a shift in the ratio of men and women students. The small liberal arts colleges will feel this change more than others as they can no longer regulate the desirable "social mix" of students when it comes to men and women. Particular colleges may feel apprehensive, but they are already beginning to adjust and emphasize the advantages of their programs to women as well as men. Even that is preferable to a shrinking enrollment!!

Perhaps the most striking and immediate impact of the women's movement in higher education has been on the hiring and promotion of qualified women. It is here that often the discussion and negotiation between women's groups and university administrations have been so frustrating that federal laws and regulations have been resorted to and their enforcement has been requested. It is here that despite the repeated scholarly documentation of discrimination against women, male academicians have refused to even acknowledge that

there is a problem. The insensitivity to existing inequities is illustrated by the distinguished male professor who said that he had been searching for qualified women to fill a faculty position for 15 years but that he couldn't find one. When it was suggested that he submit a written report of why the women applicants were not qualified, he became enraged and left the room.

The wailings of white male academicians range from the infringement of academic freedom (not relevant to this problem) to reverse discrimination (just a reduction of the preferential treatment accorded white males). One still hears the opinion that women just "can't cut the mustard" and hiring them would dilute academic excellence. This is difficult to accept in the face of studies which show that the average woman doctorate is academically superior to the average male doctorate. I am assuming that you agree that college professors, like other professions, have a few very good ones, a few very poor ones and that the majority of academic faculties fall in between, into the average group. That, in itself, is often a hard concept to swallow.

Understandably, the most overt hostility toward equal opportunity for women is from those who have to associate daily with the realities of equality - those who are required to treat their women colleagues with whom they associate daily as truly equal. That means sharing the influence and decision making powers on an equal basis. That kind of change is not likely to come about by intellectual reasoning, appeal to humanistic motives or even by court action for colleges and universities are in court daily on many issues and have the time and money to delay for years action required by the courts. Only the threat of withholding funds is likely to bring about the desired equality in a reasonable period of time.

More and more women are organizing on campuses despite the apprehension about the effect it will have on their careers for it is a well known fact

that administrators do not reward those who "rock the boat". As the issue of sexual equality becomes more respectable on campuses one finds a shift from the ad hoc women's groups toward the involvement of the more accepted, prestigious groups such as AAUP through their reactivated Committee "W". All groups are becoming increasingly sophisticated and knowledgeable about negotiation as well as the laws and regulations which undergird their demands. Therefore, the momentum toward equality can be expected to continue.

The types of women achieving academic success in academia will almost surely change as expectations for their performance become more realistic and equitable. Almost everyone today would consider hiring the clearly superior women, but there are few Marie Curries among us just as there are few Nobel prize winners walking down the halls of most of our institutions. A place will have to be made for the average woman doctorate just as it has been for the average male doctorate. Also, there will have to be a decreasing preference for the safe, controlable woman; the forcefulness and leadership qualities considered an asset for men will have to be considered an asset for women too.

Meaningful part-time opportunities must be extended to women in academe. Most universities have a long-standing tradition of part-time teaching. Research and administrative duties as well as government and industry consulting is regarded as desirable both for the university and for professional growth. An unbiased reappraisal of the quality of teaching whether an individual is a part-time teacher, consultant, administrator or researcher with a commitment to the university, federal agencies or industry or whether one is a part-time teacher, consultant, administrator, or researcher with a part-time commitment elsewhere will, I suggest, reveal very little difference in the

quality of service the university gets for its money. The denial of meaningful part-time employment for fully qualified professional women forces them into a male structured pattern, convenient and desirable for men, but it may cause undue stress to a woman who assumes family and community responsibilities. As morewomen choose to have both a family and a career, and as fathers play a more significant role in raising children, more flexible work arrangements may be examined. A preview of the increased flexibility as sex roles modify is seen in the recent HEW Guidelines for Higher Education which say that if employees are granted leave for personal reasons, child care leaves should be available to men and women on an equal basis.

As affirmative action programs are implemented and more women are visible at all levels, young women students will finally have the highly important role models in large enough numbers that they will come to feel that there really is a chance to become an educator at the college level.

If the needed reforms are too long in coming, the women's movement may well have a positive effect on the unionization of faculties. Women are looking carefully at the rapid increase of collective bargaining on campus as a means of achieving equality. They realize that to protect their interests, they must become active at the initial stages. They could become the group that tips the scale when the issue comes to a vote.

As present day women increase in both the teaching and decision making levels, they frequently bring with them, as a result of the socialization process different interests, attitudes, aspirations and expectations from those of their male counterparts. Almost certainly these differences will have a modifying influence on the policies and practices of higher education. For example, the academic reward system was established by men and benefits the interests and activities which reflects men's interests. While lip-service

is always paid to teaching where women devote most of their time, the greater rewards are still in the male-dominated areas of administration, research and publications. Austin and Bayer suggest that the influx of women into academe may restructure the reward system which would emphasize teaching and reflect more nearly the prime educational objectives of American colleges and universities.[3] Such a modification may well ameliorate the conflict among students, teachers and administrators and encourage a more humanistic atmosphere in which to pursue learning.

Change is often a threatening, sometimes painful process, but if approached in a constructive manner, the modification caused by the women's movement will be advantageous to women, men and higher education.

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